TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE: MODELS AND PRACTICES

'Reality Check'

PLAN AND SPEAKER BRIEF FOR REVIEWS OF 4 INTERNATIONAL MODELS OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AT WORKSHOPS IN BALLYMENA, BELFAST AND CRAIGAVON OCTOBER 19-21 2016

Purpose

3 workshops have been organised to enable tenants of the Housing Executive and housing associations, and other key stakeholders in Northern Ireland to discuss the relevance of recent research on models of tenant involvement in governance. The aim is to identify and check international models that may be relevant to adapt and adopt in Northern Ireland.

Method

The workshops aim to 'reality check' four international models for relevance to Northern Ireland. Expert speakers will introduce these models using a common format set out later in this plan. Members of the Supporting Communities team will then say a few words about relevance to Northern Ireland, using a common format. There will then be an opportunity for direct Q&A by tenants and other stakeholders to clarify how these models work in practice and how they might work in Northern Ireland. All workshop participants will able to comment on the models using a 'post it wall' and a 'reality check' vote based on several common criteria. As participants will only have the opportunity to check one model at each event, provision will be made for comments by email afterwards based on all four model summaries and workshop notes.

Programme (see attached flier)

First there will be an update on the state of the art in Northern Ireland based on a literature review, interviews with 24 stakeholders and 3 case studies to assess the strengths of existing models and prospects for the future. Next there will be an overview of research on international models to discover what can be learned from different contexts. Both of these introductions will include short group discussion and Q&A identifying progress, gaps and next steps.

The main part of the workshop will comprise two parallel 90 minute 'reality checks' of international models. Participants will be allocated between two groups to discuss one or the other of the two models being presented at each workshop based on preferences and balancing the size of the groups. The remainder of this plan sets out the proposed process for these 'reality checks'

What are the models and who is introducing them?

- **Austrian Model** – building participation in to the development process – **Richard Lang, University of Linz (Workshops 1 and 2 Weds 19 Thurs 20 Oct)**
- **Dutch Model** – Local Area Agreements 2015 Housing Act –**Daniel Bosch, Board member Amsterdam Tenants Association (Workshops 1 and 2 Weds 19 & Thursday 20 Oct)**
- **Welsh Model** – new start up coops in Wales – **Nic Bliss, Confederation of Cooperative Housing (Workshop 3 Friday 21 Oc)**
- **English Model** – Community Gateway - tenant representation on the board, community links & innovative ways of involving & engaging tenants – **Paul Kelly with Veronica McLintock, David Yates, and Angela Ayres, Tenant Board Members Community Gateway Association (Workshop 3 Friday 21 Oct)**

Reality Check Method

Speakers will be asked to complete a two to three page description of their model (draft example attached). These will be co-written with David Mullins using the headings set out below. **These descriptions will be completed by October 10th.**

These descriptions will be circulated before the event (by October 14th) with the final agenda and presented by the model experts in the first fifteen minutes of the reality check.

This will be followed by five minute commentaries by Supporting Communities team members on relevance to the Northern Ireland context using the criteria set out below

There will then be a period of Q&A in which participants will better understand the models and how they work in practice.

In the final part of the reality check the views of all participants will be sought using a 'post it note wall' and shows of hands using the assessment criteria set out below.

A short report of each reality check will be written up by the research team soon after the evens and circulated to all participants in all three workshops.

Tenants will be able to vote and comment on all four models by email and social media

Model Descriptions

Name of Model:

Relevance: What gap could it potentially fill in Northern Ireland?

Context: city, country in which this model operates and date introduced

Origins and background: where did the model come from and how did it develop?

Brief Description of the principles of the model

Key actors: who are the main people who make the model work? Who are the model's main supporters

Enablers:

Barriers:

Brief Assessment of how the model works in practice:

Evidence of Success:

Scale and Costs:

Advantages for Tenants:

Relevance to Northern Ireland Criteria:

Could this work here ?

Key similarities and differences in context

NI Enablers: Who is likely to be interested/support in NI?

NI Barriers: what would need to change for this to work here?

Assessment Criteria for Tenants Reality Check

Could this work here ?

Would tenants want to take part?

Key similarities and differences in context

Who is likely to be interested/support in NI?

What changes would it take to make it work here?

What might make this model attractive to tenants?

Model Descriptions (example)

Name of Model:	Local Area Performance Agreements 2015 Housing Act
Relevance: Potential Gap Filled in Northern Ireland:	**Local area focus for involvement to respond to the new powers of Super Councils for planning and community strategies. The need for closer working between NIHE and HA landlords at a local level.**
Context: city, country in which this model operates and date introduced	**Netherlands** **Example Amsterdam** **2015**
Origins and background: where did the model come from and how did it develop?	**Legislation designed to improve local accountability of housing.** (articles 42, 43 and 44 of the Dutch Housing Act 2015) Law on 'Consultation Tenants / Social Landlords'
Brief Description of the principles of the model	Tenants are involved in drafting, implementing and evaluating performance agreements with their landlords and the local authority. This entails 4 steps and form an annual cycle. **Step 1: Draft local housing policy** Each local authority should draft a local housing policy. This is a concise document outlining the local authority's main housing goals. It could take the form of a Housing Strategy or Housing Agenda for a specific time period. **Step 2: Housing association submits a local offer on how it will contribute to the local housing policy** Once the local authority has published its housing policy each housing association with local stock is required to submit a local offer on how it will contribute to this policy. This may be part of a joint proposal of all housing associations working in the municipality. The offer should include a list of activities in which the housing association makes clear its contribution to the delivery of the housing policy. The housing association consults with its own tenant organisation on the details of the offer. The offer is considered part of the housing association's regular policy development cycle. Tenant organisations therefore should be involved in the drafting of this policy in compliance the Law on ' Consultation Tenants / Social Landlords'. The housing association's offer should be reasonable: investments should be in proportion to the assets of the housing association and the local housing challenges. To assess this, the Minister will make available information on the financial capabilities of the housing association to municipality and the tenant organisation. The housing association's offer should include an invitation to discuss the drafting of the performance agreements. **Step 3 - Draft performance agreements** Housing association, municipality and the tenants organisations discuss the proposal submitted by the housing association and use the municipal housing policy to assess whether the proposal is proportionate and adequate. If the three parties fail to agree on performance agreements, the municipality, tenants organisation and/or housing association may

	report disputes to the Minister. Parties need to do this within four weeks after the dispute has arisen. An advisory committee will assess the dispute. In this assessment, the committee will consider the municipal housing policy and the financial capabilities of the housing association. The committee advises the Minister, who then makes a binding decision. **Step 4 – Evaluate implementation of performance agreements** In May of each year, the local authority, housing association and tenants organisation discuss the progress made on the implementation of the performance agreements in the previous year. This concerns both the implementation of the annual and the five-yearly agreements. The housing association provides insight into implementation progress in its Annual Report.
Key actors: who are the main people who make the model work? Who are the model's main supporters	**Local Authority. Housing Associations operating in the local authority area. Tenants Organisations. Central Government Department. Ministerial Advisory Committee**
Enablers:	**Legal compliance; Minister and Advisory Committee** **Local authority drafting of a housing policy**: without this policy housing associations cannot reasonably be expected to formulate a local offer. **Housing associations must draft their local offer** after consultation with their tenants. The offer needs to be specific for the coming year and should be complemented with a more general overview of activities for the next four years. The housing association's offer is reviewed annually. **Tenants organisations must have the capacity and resources** to participate effectively
Barriers:	**Existing consultation arrangements with tenants must be strong** **Effective partnerships between associations to formulate a collective view at local authority level** **Government must provide good information** **Dispute resolution process** **Tenant organisation capacity**
Brief Assessment of how the model works in practice	**The system has been in operation for only one year.**
Evidence of Success:	**Comments from Daniel here**
Scale and Costs:	
Advantages for tenants?	**Comments from Daniel here**